

Future of Work Commission: Digital Equity

a necessity for civic and cultural participation, employment,
lifelong learning, and access to essential services

Presenter:

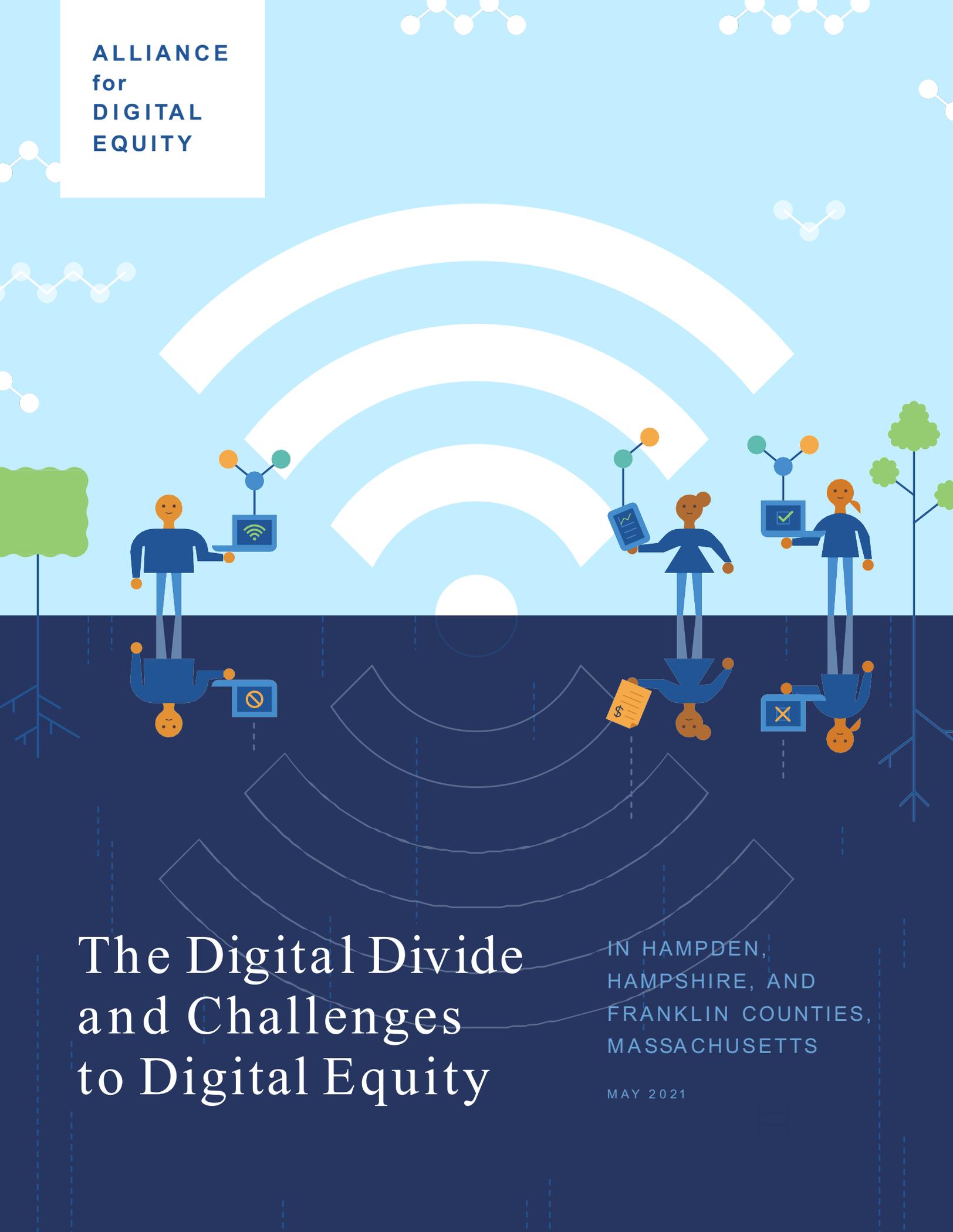
Frank Robinson, PhD

Alliance for Digital Equity in Western Massachusetts

October 26, 2021



ALLIANCE
for
DIGITAL
EQUITY



The Digital Divide and Challenges to Digital Equity

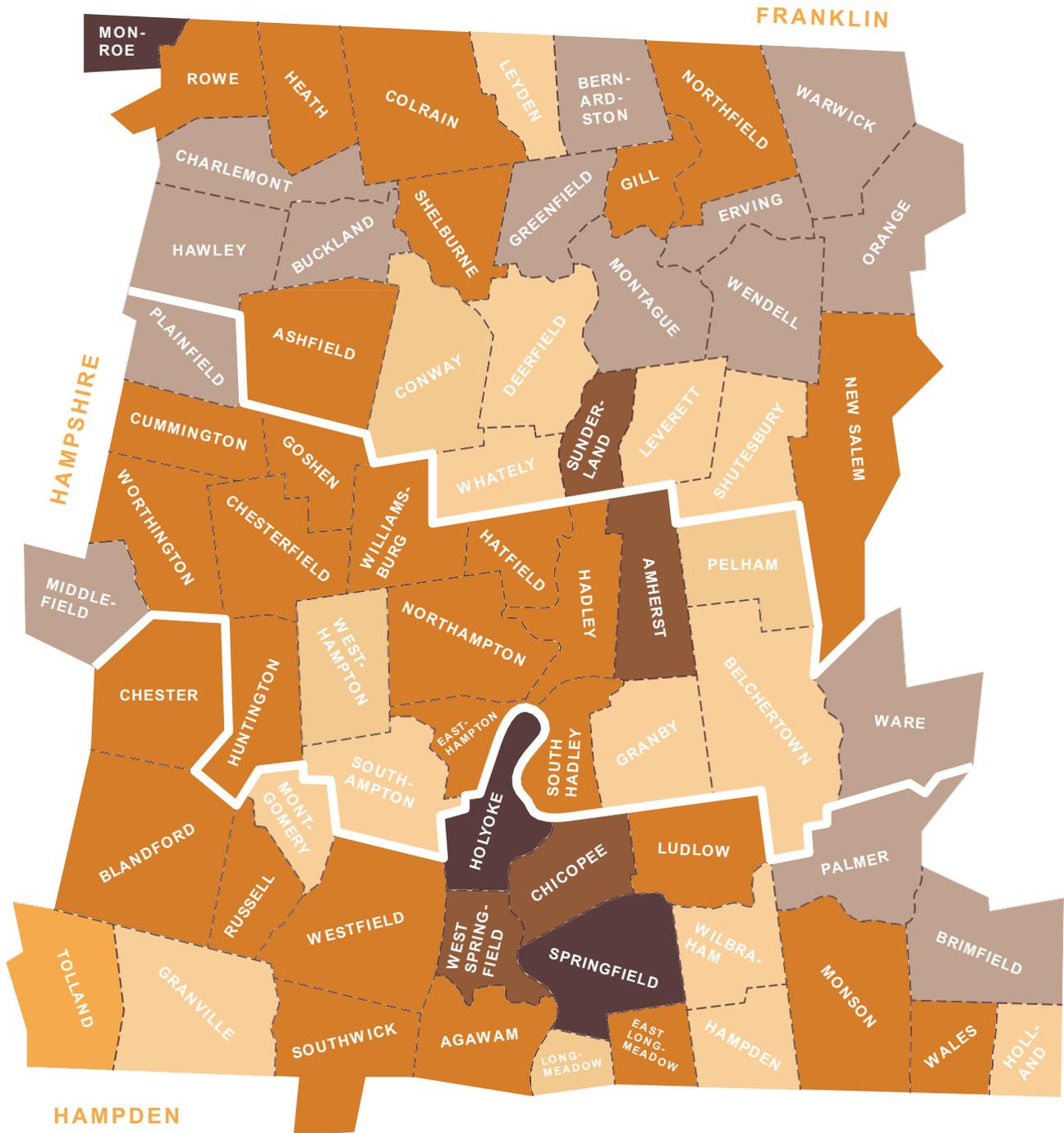
IN HAMPDEN,
HAMPSHIRE, AND
FRANKLIN COUNTIES,
MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 2021

HAMPDEN, HAMPSHIRE, AND FRANKLIN COUNTIES, MASSACHUSETTS
INCOME BELOW LIVING WAGE

A living wage is defined as the minimum income necessary for a household to meet their basic needs. Many households in our region do not earn a living wage. The threshold for this map is set at \$50,000, which is the approximate living wage for a two-person household in each of the three counties represented. Please see the appendix for income data for the individual municipalities.

- 50% or greater
- 40-49%
- 30-39%
- 20-29%
- 15-19%



Sources: 2014-2019 United States Census Data
[MIT Living Wage Calculator](https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/25/locations)
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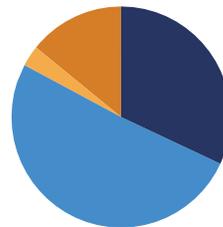
Different people
experience the
digital divide
differently.

**The digital divide
causes people
who are already
impacted to be
impacted more.**

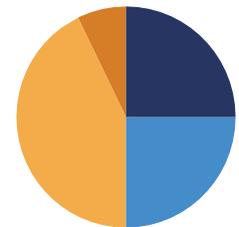
Which barrier to digital equity is most encountered by each impacted group?

Source:
2021 Alliance for
Digital Equity
regional
assessment

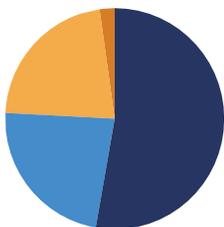
-  Lack of Connectivity
-  Lack of Equipment
-  Lack of Digital Literacy
-  Lack of Adequate Policies



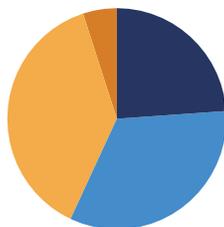
People without homes



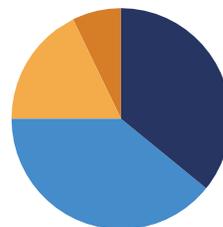
People with **mental, intellectual, and developmental disabilities**



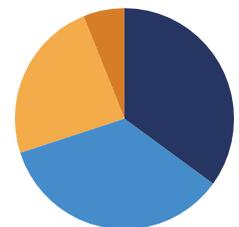
People with **low income**



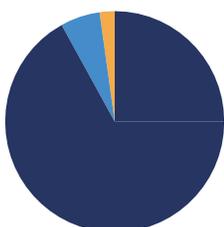
People who are **English Language Learners**



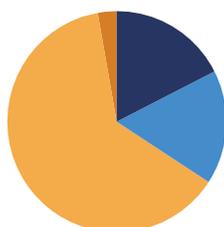
People with **physical disabilities**



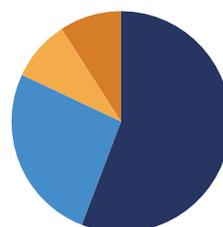
People who are **recent immigrants**



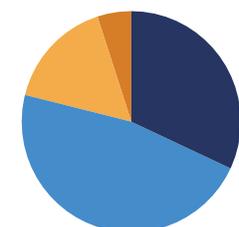
People who live in **rural areas**



People who are **older adults**



People who are **children and youths**



People who are **Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)**

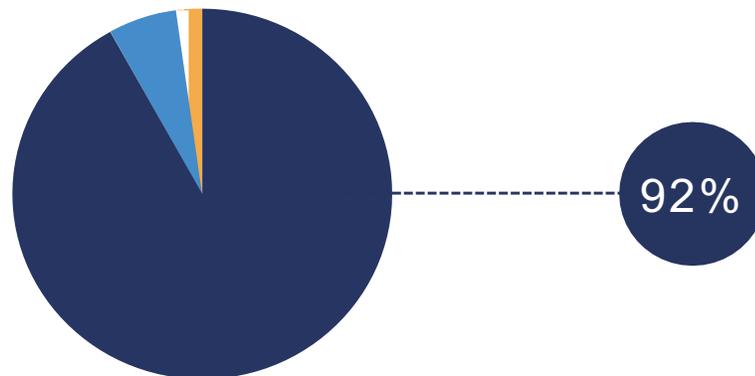
BARRIER #1

Groups whose primary barrier to digital equity is lack of connectivity

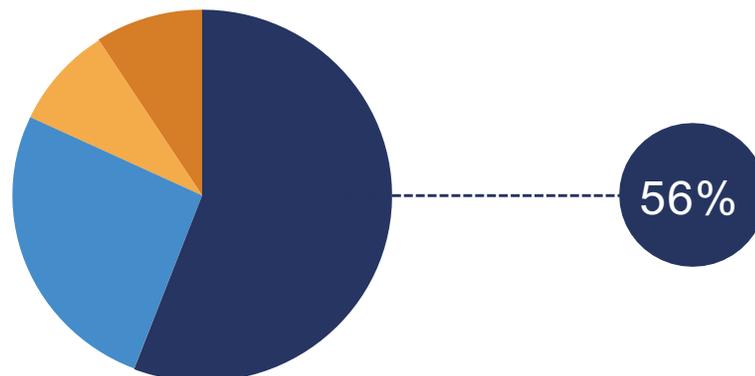
- Lack of Connectivity
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- Lack of Digital Literacy
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Source:
2021 Alliance for Digital
Equity regional assessment

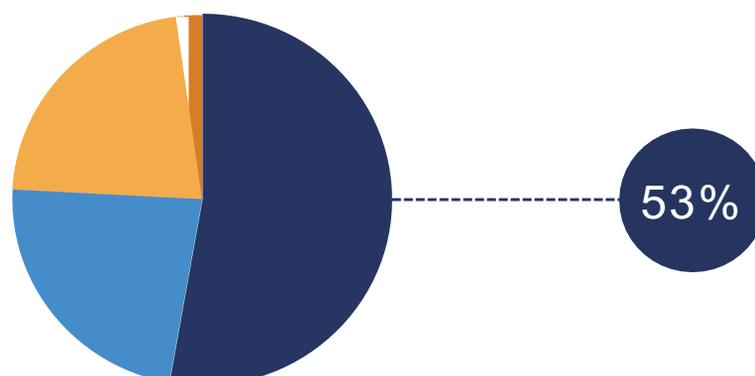
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People with low income



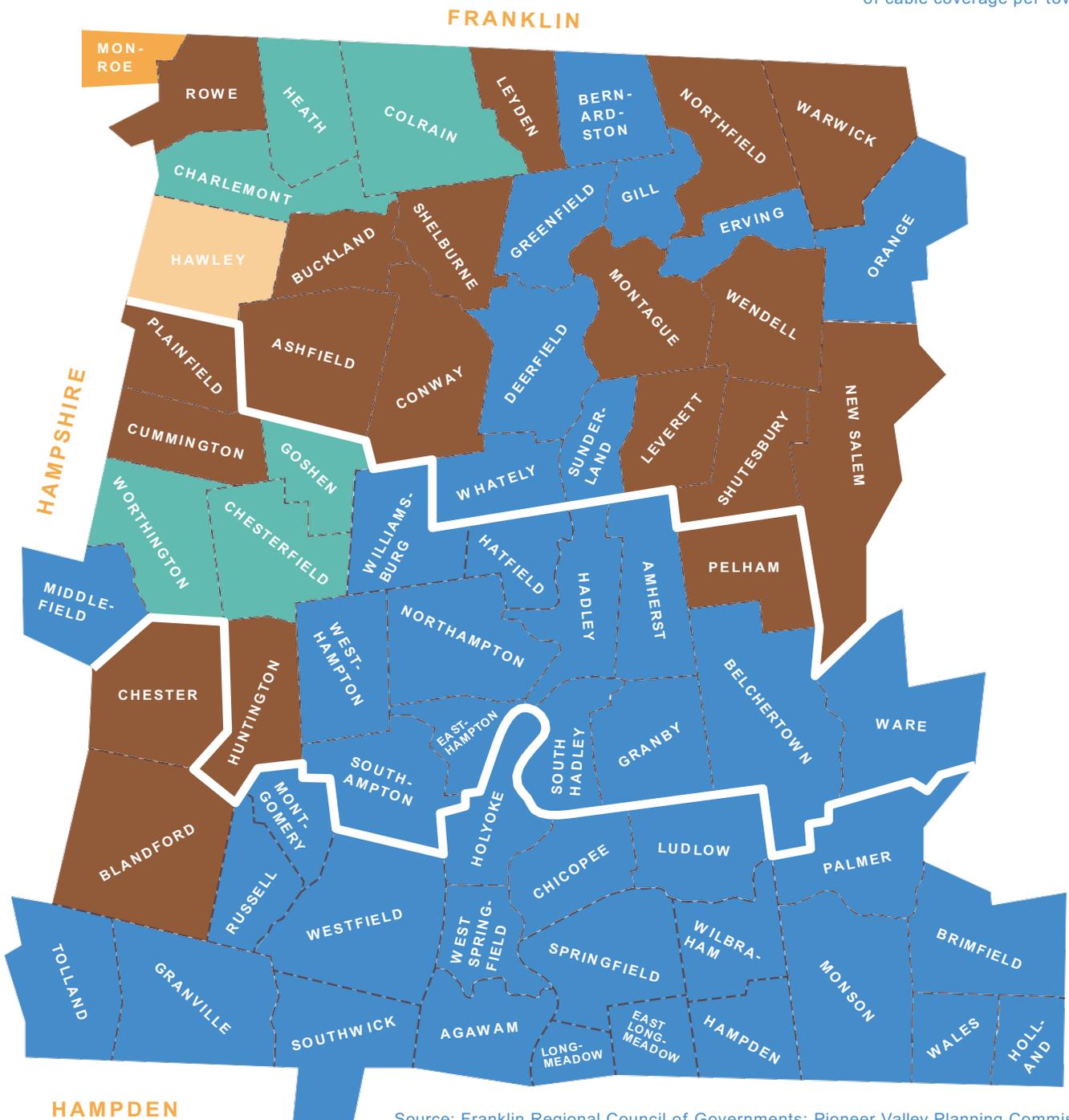
BARRIER #1

Lack of Connectivity: Broadband Infrastructure

Progress has been made over the past two decades to bring broadband infrastructure (fiber and cable) to underserved areas, but many end users still lack connectivity. The situation is dynamic and changing. It is difficult to provide a clear coverage picture, as private cable providers are not required by federal or state regulations to publicly disclose their coverage data, as providers consider it proprietary information. As a result, gaps in their service areas are not easily identified and the broadband infrastructure coverage area is not known.

BROADBAND COVERAGE
(AS OF JANUARY 2021):

- Coverage widely available
96% or greater
- Coverage less than 90%
- Coverage pending/
under construction
Dynamic status can be 0-96%
- Data not available/
proprietary
Coverage data proprietary to
service provider (statewide average
of cable coverage per town is 96%)



Source: Franklin Regional Council of Governments; Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

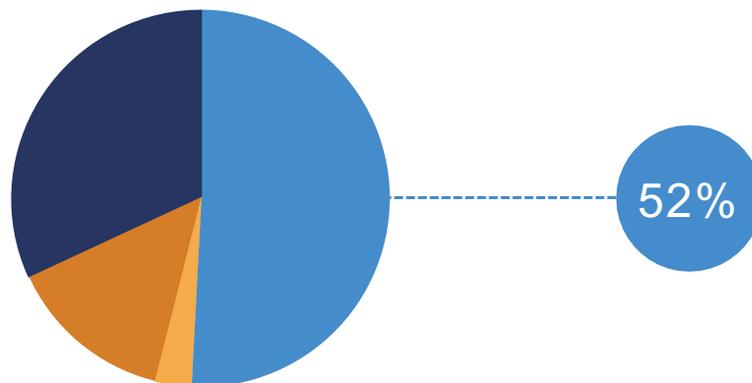
BARRIER #2

Groups whose primary barrier to digital equity is lack of equipment

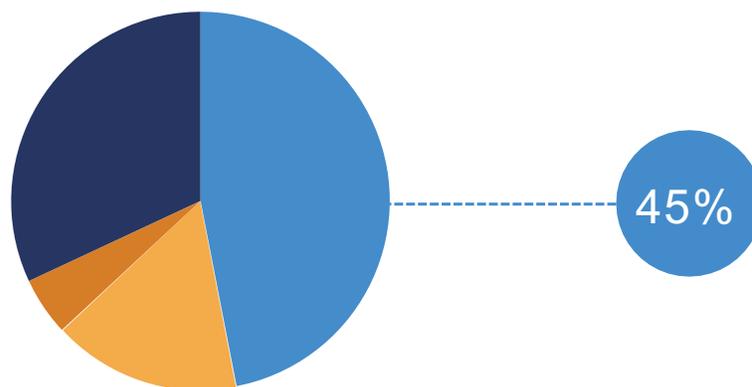
- Lack of Connectivity
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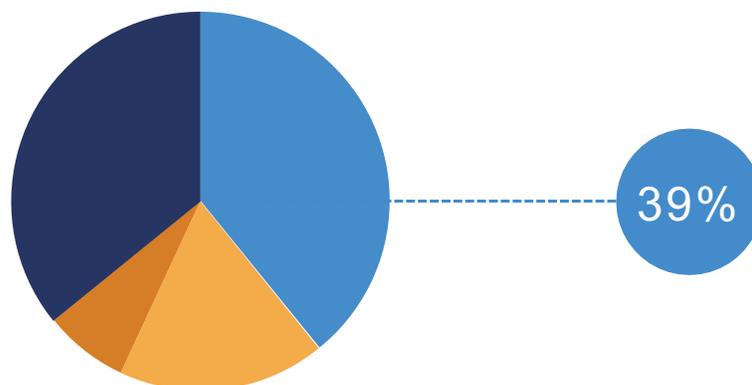
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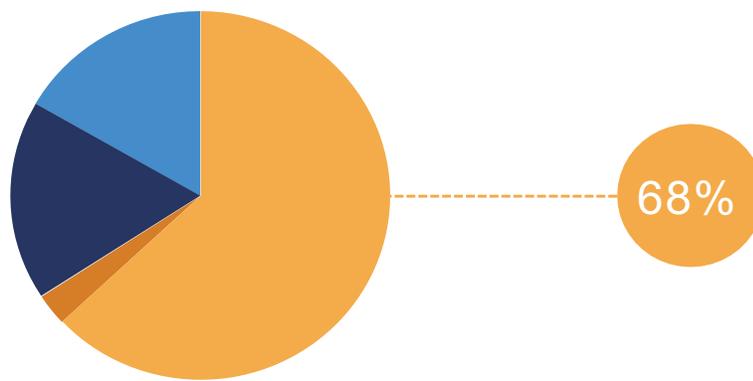
BARRIER #3

Groups whose primary barrier to digital equity is **lack of digital literacy**

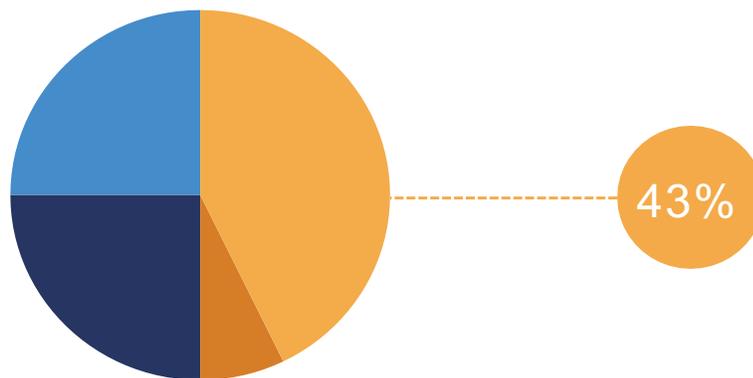
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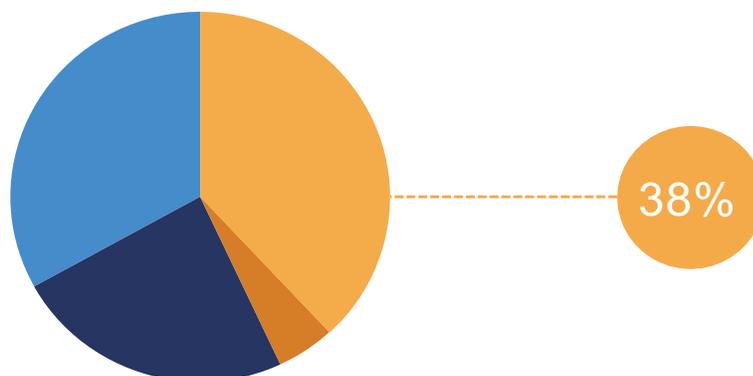
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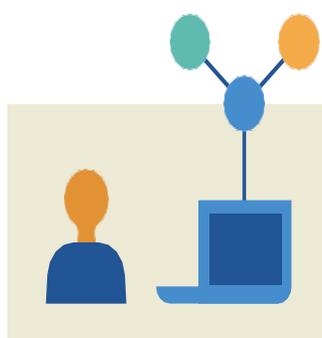
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SECTION 4

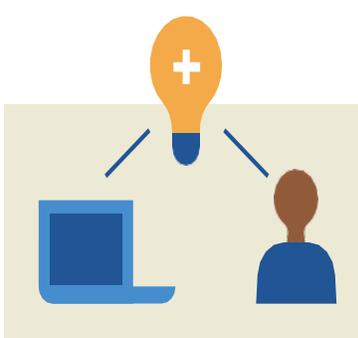
A Framework for Taking Action

The Alliance for Digital Equity's framework focuses on three categories of action that organizations and communities can take to help everyone use the internet.



1. Access

- ▶ Available
- ▶ Affordable
- ▶ Designed for Inclusion



2. Adoption

- ▶ It Matters to Community Members
- ▶ They Know How to Use It
- ▶ They Feel Safe and Comfortable Using it



3. Application

- ▶ Equitable Design Centered on Users

“Hub & Spoke” Model



Community Anchor Organizations

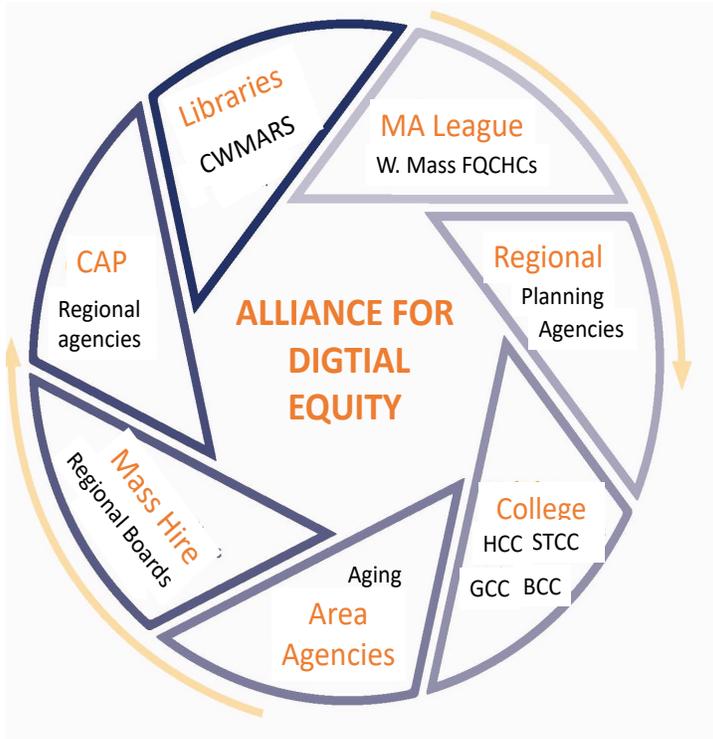
- Plan, administers and coordinates the digital community network

Regional Consumer Support Center

- Helpdesk as a virtual service
- Clearinghouse that supports access to digital resources

“Hub & Spoke” Model

Alliance for Digital Equity in Western Massachusetts



- HUB (Clearinghouse and Helpdesk)
 - Resource Partners
 - Tech Foundry
 - baytech IT
 - Springfield Public Schools
 - Holyoke Community College
- Spokes (Well-defined Populations and Networks)
 - Public Health Institute of W. Massachusetts
 - Public Libraries
 - United Ways
 - MassHire, Regional Boards
 - Regional Planning Agencies
 - Ma League of Community Health Centers
 - Public Housing Authorities
 - Regional Housing Providers
 - Community Colleges
 - Area Agencies on Aging
 - Community Action Programs

Networks of trusted brokers

- Shared agenda and goals
- Mutually reinforcing strategies that braid together resources
- Shared measures of success